

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
JOINT EUROPE COMMITTEE**

Date: 10 November 2006

Subject: **Draft Action Plan**

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Regional Assembly

Recommendation:

For the JEC to consider future activities and an action plan in light of the outcomes of the annual conference “the South East in a changing funding environment” and the proposed way forward.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting on 17 February 2006, a draft action plan was agreed by the JEC. It sets out some key policy drivers for the region matched to already existing priorities from the European Commission and aimed to enable the Committee to provide a strategic dimension to European involvement within the South East, better participate in influencing policy at a European level and build strategic alliances with other regions.
- 1.2 This paper provides a progress report on implementing the draft action plan.

2. Implementing the Action Plan

- 2.1 Overall, the policy priorities of the draft action plan have been followed by South East England House policy groups and information in the form of briefings and policy updates has been provided to partners. SEEDA undertook some work on establishing a new network on entrepreneurship education and consulted the European Commission and other European regions regarding interest and demand. The European Commission supported the idea quite strongly but there were mixed messages from other European regions and SEEDA therefore decided not to establish a formal network for the time being and pursue links on an informal basis. These have mainly been with Central Sweden and a delegation visited the South East in October 2006 to learn about SEEDA’s work on entrepreneurship education and tackling youth unemployment.

- 2.2 Membership of PURPLE has successfully continued with the network participating in policy influencing activities regarding the rural agenda and a joint submission to the Commission consultation on European Urban Policy. One key activity was the organisation of a workshop to compare progress on the implementation of national and regional rural development funding programmes in membership regions. The network has been looking at broadening its scope beyond rural policy issues to encompass regional policy and funding.
- 2.3 Work was also undertaken on setting up a new network to meet transport challenges faced by high growth regions. A meeting was held in February to discuss innovative solutions to these challenges with the Assembly's pioneering methodology on the prioritisation of schemes as the main topic. There was considerable interest from the Brussels officers of the regions present and much enthusiasm to recommend to their respective counterparts in the regions to join the network. However, over the course of the year, it became clear that there would not be sufficiently strong commitment from other regions to set up a formal network and relations will therefore be maintained on an informal adhoc basis when partners are needed for exchange of best practice and experience.
- 2.4 The South East has been selected to participate in the Committee of the Regions' Lisbon Monitoring Platform which will allow the region to promote the activities in implementing the Lisbon Agenda goals. The CoR's research contractors (Lacave Allemand & Associés in cooperation with MERIT, United Nations University – Maastricht Economic and Social Research and Training Centre on Innovation and Technology), in close cooperation with the CoR, will carry out an in-depth analysis of the selected regions and cities' responses, the results of which will be displayed on an electronic monitoring platform from end October 2006. In addition, there will be two workshops at which the South East will be represented.
- 2.5 The JEC annual conference takes place on 10 November. The South East England Regional Assembly commissioned an issues paper to identify and inform the implications of the new funding regime for South East England. It will be presented and discussed at the JEC annual conference on 10th November to help the debate on future European involvement of the South East.
- 2.6 The paper states that the new European funding offers many opportunities to support the South East's Regional Economic Strategy in both regional programmes, such as the new Competitiveness programme, and pan-European programmes such as the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development. Regional programmes can be directly shaped by regional and local actors and work on drafting the new programmes has already progressed. For pan-European programmes, there are a number of challenges such as capturing and using past experiences, mobilising the appropriate actors and helping to build up capacity for new bids. The paper concludes that the new EU funding round should be used to take a strategic view on how best to use the programmes to

- help deliver the South East's objectives. It makes a number of recommendations which will be discussed at the JEC annual event.
- 2.7 In October 2009, the European Commission published the work programme for 2007 setting out new priorities and key actions for the coming year. It will focus on modernising the European economy with a strong focus on innovation, addressing the challenges of the European society, better managing migration flows; secure, competitive and sustainable energy, making Europe a better place to live and Europe as a world partner.
- 2.8 A report on detailed actions of the action plan is attached.

3. The Way Forward

- 3.1 The issues paper provides a useful framework for a debate on a new action plan for the JEC and a new South East England House business plan where partners can lead on different areas of expertise. SEEH can play a key role in driving forward key priority actions for the South East whilst partners maintain their sub-regional identity and focus at the same time. If possible, a JEC action plan and a SEEH business plan should be closely aligned to help maximise the partners' impact in the European arena in Brussels.
- 3.2 To identify key priorities for partners, the European Commission's action plan should be analysed in view of regional and sub-regional priorities as identified in e.g. the Regional Economic Strategy, the South East Plan and the Integrated Regional Framework (IRF) which provides the overarching high-level policy framework for the region.
- 3.3 Membership in the PURPLE network should continue as it offers a strong base for exploring coalitions on a wide range of issues. The network has become widely recognised in Brussels.

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2 November 2006

ANNEX: Action plan

Policy priorities	Sub-themes	Actions including those identified in the Commission's work programme	Milestones	Results
Lisbon	Innovation	The Commission published a communication to maximise effectiveness in research and innovation policies across the European Union and has identified steps for implementing it. Meeting with OST.	Identify policy influencing opportunities and opportunities to help implement the actions and facilitate their exploitation.	SEEH organises a seminar on 20 November 2006 to inform regional stakeholders of innovation policies in three EU programmes and, more importantly, examine potential synergies between the programmes and regional and sub-regional innovation policies in the UK.
	Skills	Recommendations for a European Qualifications Framework (2006/EAC/004) Contents: To establish a European reference framework that will facilitate transparency, transfer and recognition of qualifications in Europe. A set of common reference levels will facilitate the comparison of education and training provisions and be supported by principles for quality assurance.	Identify policy influencing opportunities and facilitate their exploitation. Promote the framework across the South East.	Not done
	Entrepreneurship	Communication Financing Growth - the European way (2006/ENNTR7007) Contents: The communication aims at specifying concrete actions contributing to the growth of European innovative firms, in	Identify policy influencing opportunities and facilitate their exploitation.	Communication published. Not taken forward as it mainly affects financing institutions.

		particular SEMS, and aims at outlining actions that would help increase cross-border investment.		
	Employment	Communication of the demographic future of Europe (2006/EMPL7004) Contents: To present a synthesis of the responses to the 2005 Green Paper on ageing and proposals for future action.	To note and analyse and identify opportunities to help implement the actions.	Not done

7 th Framework for Research and Development	Research and Development	Funding opportunities under the new call opening in Autumn 2006.	Develop a strategic approach to FP7 to help increase the regions participation in funding.	Ongoing. SEEDA has done some exploratory work on better promotion of FP7 across the region which will be taken forward with stakeholders.
Environment	Climate change	Green paper on adaptation to climate change (206/ENV/012) Contents: To help identify areas for action at Community level to support the EU's adaptation to the increasing adverse effect of climate change.	To note and analyse and identify opportunities to help implement the actions.	Not yet published. The Commission will hold a conference on 1.12.2006 to take this action further.
	Waste	Thematic Strategy on the prevention of waste and recycling.	To note and analyse	Published. Information provided
	Sustainable Development	Action Plan on Energy efficiency Contents: Europe currently imports 50% of its energy. This will increase to 70% by 2030. The action plan will define steps for efficiency savings of 20% by 2020 as is recommended in the Lisbon Strategy.	Identify policy influencing opportunities and facilitate their exploitation. Promote the actions throughout the South East.	Published. Information provided
	Biodiversity	Communication - Halting the decline of biodiversity by 2010 (2005/ENV/011) Contents: To propose a roadmap with priority objectives and actions to halt the decline of biodiversity.	To note and analyse and identify opportunities to help implement the actions.	Published. Information provided. Two South East projects participated in Green Week
	Rural development	The Commission will publish the regulations for the implementation of the rural development programmes.	Identify policy influencing opportunities and facilitate their exploitation.	Regulations published. SEEDA is leading the work on drafting the South East rural programme. The PURPLE network has taken

				this forward.
Transport	Rail	<p>Commission communication on the implementation of a dedicated European rail network (2006/TREN/003)</p> <p>Contents: Promoting the development of the rail transport (in particular the rail freight transport) and creating an integrated European railway area. Facilitating the internal rail freight market. Developing performing rail freight corridors on the trans-European rail network. Focusing Community funding on identified bottlenecks. Encouraging co-operation between infrastructure managers to increase the quality and efficiency of cross-border rail freight traffic by developing international timetabling, tailor made paths.</p> <p>Communication of transport logistics to facilitate inter-modal transport (2006/TREN7010).</p>	Identify policy influencing opportunities and facilitate their exploitation.	<p>The Commission published one communication “Keep Europe moving – sustainable mobility for our continent” which is the mid-term review of the transport White paper.</p> <p>Information provided.</p> <p>Published. Information provided.</p>
	Ports	<p>Green Paper on a future European Union Maritime Policy (2006/FISH/001)</p> <p>Contents: To present the state of art of integrated sea related policies and to set out ideas for a more holistic approach.</p>	Identify policy influencing opportunities and facilitate their exploitation.	Published. Information provided.
	Airports/Aviation	<p>Modification of directive 2003/87/EC in order to include aviation in the EU emissions trading scheme</p> <p>Contents:</p>	Identify policy influencing opportunities and facilitate their exploitation.	To be published at the end of 2006

		The existing legislative framework will be amended to incorporate aviation emissions into the EU Greenhouse Gas Emissions trading Scheme (ETS).		
Structural Funds	Interreg	Cross border co-operation, participate in tri-regional strategic group with ODPM. Regional consultation organised by SEEDA, the Assembly and GOSE.	To note and analyse and identify opportunities to help implement the actions.	Participation in tri-regional strategic group with DCLG, consultations held with stakeholders across the South East on new Interreg cross border programme
	Regional Policy	NSRF consultation organised by ODPM.	Analyse the consultation and respond.	Consultation response provided to the government.
State Aids	SMEs	There will be a DTI consultation on the Regional Assistance Guidelines.	Analyse the consultation and respond.	Consultation response provided to the DTI.